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PENTECOST

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
—Acts 2:4

One often hears it said that it is ...ficult to preach about Pentecost. This ...s hardly surprising. The Pentecost ...nt is such a strange happening. ...ere seems to be so little in it that is ...e anything with which our own ex...rience acquaints us. There was a ...shing not *of* a mighty wind, but a ...shing *like* a mighty wind; there were ...ven tongues not *of* fire, but *like* fire. ... there really was no rushing wind, ...d there were no cloven tongues of ...e. There was something *like* these ...ngs. But what was this? And then ...ere is that strange speaking with "oth...tongues." What sort of speaking was ...at? These are questions about which ...minister puzzles when he settles down ... the preparation of his Pentecost ser...on. Ignore them he cannot, and real... to do something with them seems to ... so very difficult.

The difficulty is intensified by the ...rcumstance that the Bible says noth...g specifically about these puzzling ...enomena. Cross referencing won't ...lp. The noise like a wind, the tongues ...e fire, and the peculiar Pentecostal ...eaking with tongues are not dwelt up... in the rest of the New Testament. ...me believe that a relationship is to ... discerned between the speaking with ...ngues in Acts 2 and the speaking with ...ngues in I Cor. 14. But in this latter ...eaking an interpreter was needed; in ...cts the speaking was understood without an interpreter. All this is at first glance disconcerting. It seems to ask of every inquirer into the meaning of the Pentecostal phenomena that he become his own interpreter. But on second thought, is not this pervasive silence in the scriptures about the manner in which the Pentecost event took place very significant? If the divine Author of this account was not concerned to dwell upon these things, are we looking for the meaning of Pentecost in the right place when we seek to find it in these striking phenomena? Could it perhaps be that these phenomena are the interpretation of Pentecost rather than being themselves the matters that need interpretation? Should we not first try to determine what really happened at Pentecost and, when that has been done, see if these phenomena shed further light on the real meaning of Pentecost? In the brief space of this very limited article I would like to attempt a few suggestions in this direction.

* * *

One of our difficulties in dealing with Pentecost is that we look at it too much as a solitary, isolated event. We treat it as though it had no connections backward or forward. This is reflected in the place which is given to Pentecost in the preaching year. *Once* a year there is a sermon about Pentecost and then the matter is pretty much forgotten until it has to be treated again a year later. Before we can come to any appreciation at all of Pentecost we must cease to regard it as something peculiar and isolated. We must begin to see Pentecost as a *wonderful* event and as integrated with the *whole* of redemptive history. We must continue to think of

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Pentecost — Continued

Pentecost as an event, but as *an event that is foretold by the prophets and by Jesus, that conditions the life of the new Testament Church in all its dimensions, and that initiated in history the life of heaven.* Pentecost should be regarded in the same way in which we view Creation, Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection. These are all events, but they are events trailing power, history, and glory. They are *once for all* events, *divine* actions, and therefore actions that *decisively qualify* all the history which they control. Pentecost not only stands on the same level with these other divine concerns with mankind and the world, but it is their *culmination,* it is the introduction of the *new age,* the manifestation in history of the *new creation.* When we talk about Pentecost, when we carry its meaning before the world and before the Church of Christ, we have other and higher things to do than put together the pieces of a linguistic puzzle.

But, concretely, what does Pentecost mean? When the candidate of a victorious party is inaugurated a new administration takes office. This in itself says nothing, however, about the aims and nature of the new administration. We must therefore ask: What is the character of this new administration, this divine economy that was inaugurated at Pentecost? What has it effected in the lives of men and in the Church, and in their continuing and forever to continue history?

When we say Pentecost we say *Holy Spirit.* And when we say Holy Spirit we say, if we would speak biblically, *Life* and *Witness.* These two are inseparably conjoined in the biblical understanding of the nature and functions of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the living and life-giving, the witnessing and to-witness-constraining Holy Spirit came to indwell the Church. From that point on the Church became a body of redeemed men and women whose central task in the world is to *communicate the life of the Spirit* through its witness to the incarnate, crucified and risen Lord. Let us briefly examine what it means that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life and the Spirit of Witness.

The Spirit is the principle of life in the natural world. He moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning, Gen. 1:2. When God sent forth his Spirit all living creatures were created and through him he renews the face of the ground, Ps. 104:30. Paralleling his life-giving function in nature is his activity in the sphere of redemption. Israel shall live when God shall pour out on them his Spirit through which he will take out the heart of stone and confer a heart of flesh, Ezek. 36:26, 27; 37:14. We are born of the Spirit, John 3:5-8, and rivers of living water shall flow from within him who has the Spirit, 7:38, 39. The Spirit is the life, the heart and center of the Church; He is the element in which she lives, the divine breath that inspires her life.

Life ever seeks to communicate itself. It is not possible fully to live and not to be reproductive. The life-begetting character of life is part of the structure and law of life. How is the life of the Spirit who indwells the Church communicated? It is communicated *through preaching.* The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit of *witness.* When God shall pour out his Spirit in the last days, said Joel, young men and maidens shall prophecy, 2:28:29. The work of the Paraclete shall be to teach, foretell, remind, guide, reveal, witness. He will convict the world of sin, rigteousness and judgment, John 14,15,16. In giving his disciples the Great Commission Christ explicitly commanded them to wait until they should receive power from on high. *Then* they would be his witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth, Luke 24: 45ff, Acts 1:8. It may not escape us that the *only* way in which Jesus speaks of the coming Spirit is as the Spirit of *witness.* New Testament scholars are at a loss how to translate the Greek word *parakletos* which Jesus calls the Spirit in John. The word "Comforter" has an old tradition behind it, but obviously it is not a description of the functions ascribed to the Paraclete. In any case, the Spirit indwelling the Church is the Spirit of witness. Through her witness the Church transmits to others the life of the Spirit and makes possible the expansion of her borders from the Palestinian beachhead to the remote islands of the ocean and to the heartland of great continents. It is through the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven that the Gospel is preached to us, I Peter 1:12; we are born anew not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the word of God that lives and abides forever, 1:23. And this living, ever abiding word of God is not simply the Bible—it is its message living in the words and deeds of the Church and of her membership, borne onward in the Power of the Spirit sent out by the Incarnate Word. Under the word "Life" we can subsume all the activitities of the Spirit and the living link between those who have this life and those whose life is a living death is the kerugma, the witness, the proclamation of the Spirit-indwelt Church.

* * *

Now we must return to the day when this all began, to Pentecost. Of the three phenomena in which the descent of the Spirit manifested itself only one receives further attention. It is the speaking with other tongues. It is left to our study of the scriptures to determine the place which the figures of wind and fire occupy in clarifying for us the redemptive processes. Into this we cannot now enter. *Acts* emphasizes the *wholly new element* that Pentecost introduced. At Pentecost

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Church became a *speaking, proclaim-*
g Church. This she had not been.
is she now became. This Peter em-
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the tongues like fire or the rushing
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ured out Spirit would make prophets
those who receive him. This Luke
phasized when he presents as the
st great effect of Pentecost Peter's
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urch became the *universal* Church
eaching a universally significant gos-
l to men who had come from many
tions. Pentecost drew the Church
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character and set her to be a light
the middle of the world, weak as the
mb whom she proclaims, and as
conquerable. Away with all these
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age, heavenly language, foreign lan-
ges, ecstatic language. They obscure
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e deep things of God and declares
em, I Cor. 2:10ff., and indwelt the
hurch so that her ambassadors may
eak the things that are freely given of
od not with words that man's wisdom
aches, but which the Holy Spirit
aches, vs. 12ff. These things we
eak in "the last days," in the time
etween the times, when the life of
eaven that *already is* struggles with
e life of the flesh and of the world
at *still is*. This time between the times
Mission time, the time of the procla-
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ord.

Pentecost is also a *searching* event.
re we such a Church as it intended we
hould be? Do we stand fearless in the
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f Life in the power of the Spirit? Or
oes the particularistic leaven that often
nakes us regard the Christian Re-
ormed Church as a very comfortable
Dutch-American society and, like the
ews, very proud of our *orthodoxy*,
hinder her witness in the world? Pen-
ecost means the gift of the Holy Spir-
t, and gift means grace, and grace ex-
cludes pride. What have we that we
have not received? And what we have
received can enrich us only when we
dispense it freely in the land and in the
world in which we have been given a
name and a place and a task.

HARRY R. BOER

Home Missions and the Church Order

by HAROLD DEKKER

A MATTER of special interest and importance at the 1954 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church will be the proper organization of denominational Home Missions. The majority and minority reports of the study committee on "The Realignment of Missions and Church Extension" are still before Synod, action having been deferred last year. Although these reports include Foreign Missions as well, most of the points at issue concern the home field. Further, there will be an overture at this year's Synod from Monsey and Classis Hackensack asking for the addition of a second home-missionary-at-large. And the Radio and Home Missions Committees are recommending a change in the organization of Back to God Hour follow-up work from that established by the Synod of 1950.

Closely related to these items, a report is due from a study committee appointed in 1953 to study the proper ecclesiastical order for neighborhood evangelism.

In this situation of growing concern with the proper structure for domestic missions we should not overlook what our Church Order says on the relation between *denominational* and *local* work in the Church.

The Realignment Dilemma

THE SYNOD of 1954 did not feel ready to adopt either the majority or the minority report on the realignment of mission agencies. This is significant. Synod seemed to find itself in something of a dilemma between these two reports.

The Majority proposed the establishment of a new denominational committee or board, in addition to the present General Committee for Home Missions, so that there would be one Committee to take care of church extension in the United States and Canada (plus the Church Help Fund and the Fund for Needy Churches) and a second Committee to devote itself exclusively to "work with the unchurched and unbelieving." The Majority argued that to have only one Committee leaves it burdened with too many "extra-evangelistic" duties.

The Minority, on the other hand, argued that such separation of denominational evangelism and church extension is neither necessary nor desirable (the writer uses the term Home Missions in this article to include both), that the plan proposed has certain serious drawbacks in itself, and that the problem is deeper than a matter of reorganization. The Minority proposed only two minor changes in organization.

Synod's Advisory Committee on Home Missions agreed in general with the Minority, but went one step further as we shall see later. When the matter then came to the floor of Synod there was an extended debate, with the result that the reports of both Majority and Minority were referred to the churches for study, and action on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee was deferred.

Synod seemed to feel caught in a dilemma. On the one hand it was not ready to accept the rather formidable changes proposed by the Majority. On the other hand it was not ready to endorse the *status quo* without reservation. The mood of Synod seemed to be something like this: Things aren't just right in Home Missions. We aren't really doing as much as we should denominationally. The Majority is right on that. But what must we do about it? Set up a complete new synodical committee? Hardly. What then? Go along with the Minority in general agreement with the present practice? Hardly that either.

It is especially important to note the advice of Synod's Advisory Committee. That Committee recommended neither approval of the Majority nor Minority, but felt after a third possibility. Its first recommendation was that Synod "do not adopt the plan of reorganization proposed by the majority re-

port." Its second recommendation was as follows: "That Synod instruct our Home Missions Committee to take steps to coordinate and integrate our mission effort and mobilize our congregations as missionary agencies." This recommendation was not seriously considered by Synod, because when it was decided to defer action on the first recommendation the second was almost automatically deferred. But this second recommendation must not be lost sight of. It suggests a third alternative. It gives a valuable lead. Spelled out fully it is not only an escape from the realignment dilemma, but it is an affirmation of a basic principle of Reformed church polity which was all but overlooked in the reports of the Majority and the Minority, and which has been honored more in the breach than in the observance by the Church in the conduct of its denominational Home Missions since 1926. It will bear closer scrutiny.

Centralization and Decentralization

ONE of the moot questions in the Church today is that of centralization and decentralization. There is nothing to gain by warming over the usual discussion on this point. It is worth observing, however, that Home missions has swung full pendulum from centralization to decentralization and back again.

In his study, *The Rise of Home Missions in the Christian Reformed Church* (unpublished thesis), the Reverend Dick L. Van Halsema points out that there have been five main stages in our Home Mission history: Before 1898 there was loose cooperation between denomination and the classes without a Home Mission Order. In 1898 the first Home Mission Order established fully centralized denominational control. In 1907 the second Home Mission Order went to the other extreme with complete classical control. In 1926 the third Home Mission Order established a mediating district plan with over-all denominational coordination. Finally in 1942 the fourth Home Mission Order returned to centralized control. Van Halsema says in this connection: "Reversals of policy have been frequent, being adopted when experience revealed current regulations to be undesirable."

It is clear that fluctuations between centralization and decentralization in Home Missions have been motivated more by considerations of practical expediency than of basic principle. The latest swing to centralization was motivated largely by the feeling that the consistories and the classes were not doing enough, and that to set up an efficient synodical committee with money and power to act would give us a more effective program.

Now again we are inclined to be governed by pragmatic factors. Much of this discussion about realignment is on this level. After another quarter of a century, we are considerably more Americanized. Moreover, evangelism is receiving heavy emphasis nowadays. We feel that we should be doing more. So we begin to think structurally. We want to improve the system. Of course, this is not all wrong. The organizational form in which our polity comes to expression must be efficient and effective. If for practical reasons we need another denominational Committee or Board for the Church's mission work, there certainly is no principle which is violated. If, on the other hand, one Committee can do the work, there is nothing in our polity to demand two. But certainly *matters of basic principle must not be overlooked.*

The Church Order

WHEN the issues of centralization and decentralization are discussed among us the discussion usually revolves around practical considerations such as financial costs, use of the Church's talent, interest on the part of rank and file membership, aspects of concentrating things at Grand Rapids, general efficiency, etc. Now these are not irrelevant, but there is a more basic factor. The basic factor is simply *the Church Order.* And certainly the Church Order has a good deal to say about the structure of Home Missions.

The Advisory Committee of Synod pointd in that direction, perhaps without realizing it fully, when it recommended that Synod should "instruct our Home Missions Committee to take steps to coordinate and integrate our mission effort and mobilize our congregations as missionary agencies." That statement points to something all but overlooked in the reports of the Majority and the Minority. In effect the Advisory Committee was saying, "Look here, doesn't the Church Order have something to say on this matter?"

Indeed it does have something to say. What it says is well-known and plain: "*In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the churches of the assembly in common.*" (Article 30) What does this say about Home Missions? It says much. It says that Home Missions (Evangelism if you prefer) is first of all the responsibility of the Consistory. The Consistory must do all that it can with its opportunities, using available money and personnel. Only thereafter the Classis comes in. What should the Classis do? It should carry on Home Missions to the extent that it can not be *finished* by the Consistories and to the extent that it pertains to the Consistories *in common.* Finally there is Synod, related to Classes in the same way Classes is related to Consistory. That is clear and simple. Home Missions suffers from neither centralization nor decentralization if the Church Order is faithfully observed.[1]

Consistory, Classis and Synod

THERE has been local home mission work in the Church for many years. We must be grateful for the patient and persistent effort of a small minority who had vision for it during the years when consistories were generally quite unconcerned and inactive, and happily during recent years neighborhood evangelism is developing rapidly.

But an observation in respect to Article 30 of the Church Order may not be amiss. *Local* Home Missions is ordinarily quite unrelated to *denominational* Home Missions. Usually it is not an organic part of the whole, well fitted into the Consistory-Classis-Synod order of activity. It is something apart and separate. If the local church needs

1. Comparisons with Foreign Missions operations are not helpful at this point, for in that area Consistory and Classis are ordinarily quite limited in actually conducting any work. In the very nature of the case Home Missions *can* be handled by Consistory and Classis, making the applicability of the Church Order unmistakable.

dvice on methodology, assistance with certain project, or some kind of material, does it carry these matters to classis? Then perhaps eventually to synod? Not ordinarily. But that's what the Church Order expects. What more, as others also have pointed out, there is a disturbing dualism between local and denominational Home Missions. Local Home Missions operates largely in terms of lay worker leadership and chapel objectives, whereas denominational Home Missions operates in terms of ordained leadership and objectives of the established church.

The Church Order intends that the work of all ecclesiastical assemblies should be organically related. Local Home Missions must seek denominational help and cooperation, and denominational Home Missions must show concern for those things which pertain to the churches in common." Local effort should not exclude ordained leadership and the establishment of new churches, nor should denominational effort exclude the service of lay workers and the use of the chapel method. The Church's Home Missions is of one piece. There should be continuity and living relations. But we have lost the spirit of the Church Order, as well as failing to observe its letter, and have largely kept apart things which belong together.

As far as the Classis is concerned, the situation is little better. The Classis should have its own Home Mission program, doing the work in its area which can not be finished by the various Consistories, and handling matters which pertain to the Consistories in common. But most Classes do not really carry on Home Missions. The typical Classical Home Mission Committee is rather inactive and exercises little initiative. In general the relationship between Classis and Synod on this score is exactly the opposite of what the Church Order calls for. Synod should be doing what the Classes do not handle. Actually the Classes are filling in certain details which Synod does not handle. The Synod is supposed to be a servant of the Classis, but in Home Missions the Classis is largely the servant of Synod. Synod lays down policy, picks the fields, virtually selects the home missionaries, administers funds, makes all the major decisions, and holds most of the initiative. To be can did about it, as far as present procedures are concerned the Church's home mission program could get along *almost* as well without the various Classical Home Mission Committees. All that the denominational agency really needs is representation in each geographical area to be on the alert for new fields and to represent its interests in certain details of operation.

Each Its Own

Now let's get back to our starting-point—the realignment dilemma. In pleading for the creation of a second denominational Committee—one to be mainly for evangelism and another mainly for church extension—the Majority argued that the present General Committee for Home Missions is overloaded, that it carries too many "extra-evangelistic" burdens, and that therefore its "excellent studies on a Calvinistic evangelism" have not yet been projected into "field activity." It is, in my judgment, indisputable that the General Committee is overloaded. To do its real work its responsibilities should be trimmed down. But to separate its work in evangelism from that in church extension, as the Minority has pointed out, is not conducive to the best interests of either. They belong together.

But the Advisory Committee of Synod pointed to another possibility. It is simple, almost elementary. Let the General Committee do only what is the proper business of Synod. Let it maintain strictly correct relations with the Classes. Let Article 30 of the Church Order be properly observed, and the General Committee will be clearly in a position to do aggressive and effective work on what is its main task—*serving the classes and consistories in their specific Home Mission tasks and conducting its own Home Missions on a broad national front.*

Let the Classis retrieve its proper role in Home Missions. It has lost this role mostly through default. Synod took over when the Classis was doing little or nothing. But if there were ever any justification for Synod to do the work of Classis, that day is certainly past. There is now plenty of interest in Home Missions on the classical level. Why should there be a denominational home missionary working in places like Grand Rapids and Holland and Kalamazoo? That work can certainly be done by the Classes. Why should there be a denominational missionary working in the Chicago area? Let the two Chicago classes run their own program there. And can not Classes Hackensack and Hudson carry on work in New York City without denominational jurisdiction? Of course they can. And what of work in Lemars, Iowa? And in Sioux City? And in Lakewood, California? By what justification either in principle or in practice (and what is right in principle is really always right in practice) do we carry on *synodical* work in places such as these?

If someone weakly objects that the Classes do not have money to carry on Home Missions, the answer is clear. Raise it! Of course Classis should have money for Home Missions. At least one Classis has a Home Mission quota now. Does someone say that a classical quota can not be raised in addition to the present synodical quota? That is open to debate. But if so, let the money seek its proper levels. We needn't fear what is right. *If* the Classes would really do their jobs in Home Missions, the denominational job would be trimmed down to the point where the General Committee could possibly do with a smaller quota.

But my own experience is that there is much more money in the churches for Home Missions than *anyone* is now getting. The Synod is not likely to get any more of it, except by enlisting sponsoring churches for specific fields —and that can be done by Classes just as well or better! The financial factor doesn't cut any ice in this discussion—except that the more work is conducted by the Classes and Consistories, the closer it is brought to the people who give, the more money there will be for Home Missions as a whole.

And let's not forget the Consistories. Let them take another look at their specific opportunities. They can do much without either Classis or Synod, except for the "know-how" and the material which the broader assemblies should be ready to give them. Parish evangelism is coming into its own among us. Let it come! It is one of the most hopeful signs in the Home Missions sky. And let the Consistories be bold. Churches like Rochester, N. Y., and Eastside Cleveland are giving strong examples. Such churches may need a few thousand dollars to help pay the

Home Missions and the Church Order — Continued

salary of a full-time worker, lay or ordained, but that isn't hard. The course is clear. Appeal to Classis! If Classis can not help, let the request go to Synod. It surely is no great strain on the time and energy of the denominational agency to disburse an annual subsidy for such work. The administration then rests entirely where it belongs—with the Consistory. The Rochester and Cleveland cases are beautiful examples of the Church Order at work in Home Missions. Here the traffic moves in the right direction —from bottom to top, not from top to bottom. The Consistory asks for denominational help. The denomination doesn't ask the Consistory for cooperation when it moves in.

As far as the Church Order is concerned, the Consistory may be even more bold than to work in its own immediate area. If Whitinsville wants to work in Boston, there is nothing to stop it. If East Saugatuck should want to work in Benton Harbor, why not? Let Lafayette go into Indianapolis, Pease into St. Cloud, Cleveland into Akron, or Ripon into Bakersfield. Of course there must be coordination. Let the General Committee coordinate and advise and help in every way it can. That's where the denomination properly comes in according to Article 30.

The General Committee

THEN let the General Committee for Home Missions be the *General* Committee. If it should limit itself to what is properly the province of Synod under Article 30, it will do just two things— 1) Serve the Consistories and Classes with expert counsel and effective material, and 2) Carry on Home Missions where neither the Consistories or the Classes can reach. These two things it should be in a position to do well. And then let all the other details sift back where they belong—to classical and consistorial levels.

Let the General Committee serve the Consistories and the Classes. Let it develop an up-to-date, expert evangelistic methodology, and share this by means of print and personal contact with all those in the Church who need and ask for it—a real "know-how in community survey, in publicity, in visitation evangelism, in working through the organizations of the Church in vacation Bible schools, in instructing converts, in the planning of physical facilities, etc. Let the General Committee also provide top-notch equipment for evangelism — pamphlets and tracts, study materials and other items of literature, canvass materials and instructions for workers, film strips and movies, etc. This material can be produced in part by the Committee itself, and in part can be found elsewhere in suitable form. Even the latter is a sizeable task since there is now an avalanche of material for evangelism coming out of the American churches, and it is a hopeless task for the regular pastor or even the individual home missionary to keep up with it. Such a service program would be invaluable for the Church's Home Missions from top to bottom and would be one of the greatest things the General Committee could undertake.

And then let the General Committee carry on Home Missions of its own where the Consistories and the Classes do not reach. Let it concentrate on those large cities across the nation—76 out of 100 largest for instance where there is no Christian Reformed work of any kind. Let the General Committee specialize in getting the Christian Reformed Church out of its provincial isolation in a few small corners of the nation and put it on the main street where it belongs. That's the business of *denominational Home Missions*—the long view, the broad scope, the big perspective. Let the General Committee concern itself with St. Louis not Chicago, Kansas City not Lemars, Sacramento not Lakewood, Norfolk not North Haledon, Toledo not Grand Rapids. Let the General Committee push out the frontiers, and leave it to the Consistories and the Classes to come behind and fill the spaces between. Let the Synod concentrate on a broad-guage program of truly national Home Missions.

There's nothing new in all this. It's as old as the Church Order. *"In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the churches of the assembly in common."* Let the Consistories do consistorial Home Missions. Let the Classes do classical Home Missions. Let the Synod do synodical Home Missions.

When Synod meets on Home Missions, let the Church Order be heard. It speaks to our present situation with authority and wisdom.

"Send it to Synod"

by WILLIAM P. BRINK*

TWO of the largest books to enter our home last year were the Sears-Roebuck Catalogue and the *Acts of Synod of* 1953. For many years the great mail order house has published a large volume to advertise its wares. It is only in recent years, however, that the Christian Reformed Church has begun to publish such large volumes. The last *Acts* had no less than 593 pages. Of this number, 161 pages contain the minutes of the Synodical sessions, 376 pages present reports which were placed before the Synod, and 38 pages are devoted to the overtures to Synod.

Although the voluminosity of the tome seems to spell its importance, we wonder whether this very fact may not also have its disadvantages. There are certain books which look so weighty that few people dare to read them. Many people lack the courage to undertake reading books like Hugo's *Les Miserables* or Tolstoi's *War and Peace* simply because of their size. It must be admitted, of course, that our *Acts* has not yet reached the size of these classics, but what is lacking in size may be made up in aridness. The question may well be asked as to whether or not the size of the *Acts* is a deterrent to its serious study by the office bearers of our denomination. We confess that we strongly suspect only a small percentage of our ministers and elders read through the *Acts of Synod*. A poll on this matter would be very interesting.

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However, there is an even more serious aspect to the size of our *Acts*. It reveals that the Synod of 1953 was faced with a great amount of work. It also raises the question of whether we are not asking too much of our Synodical assemblies.

Despite the fact that our Synods meet annually, an ever increasing amount of work seems to be delegated to them. In recent years our Synods have been unable to complete their work in the allotted time. The result is that much work is carried over into the third week, after many delagates have departed and many others have been replaced by alternates. Thus some of the decisions of Synod—and often weighty matters remain for the last sessions — must be made by a crippled assembly. From the viewpoint of the time element it appears that our Synods bear too heavy a load.

If our Synods are being asked to do more work than the time permits, it is also true that they have more material than thoroughness permits. Last year the delegates to Synod received an *Agenda* containing 273 pages of reports and overtures. It was their duty to study this material thoroughly before Synod convened. But the Agenda arrived only a month before Synod, a month in which many of the delegates had also to make preparations to leave their homes and work. From the amount of material in the *Acts* we can easily compute that during the meetings of Synod these delegates were presented with another 141 pages of reports and overtures. These materials had to be studied and digested during the meeting of Synod when the delegates were at the same time called upon to be present at the meetings of the advisory committees and at the sessions of the Synod.

From the above it should be quite apparent that our delegates to Synod have more work before them than they can handle with thoroughness. At one of the sessions of Synod last year a delegate remarked that he had not read a report in the published *Agenda*, but relied upon what he heard from the other delegates to make his decisions. If some of the delegates failed to read the materials presented a month before Synod, we wonder how much they read of the material presented at the time of Synod.

THIS article is not intended in any sense to reflect upon our delegates to Synod. We are confident that most of them did their utmost and that they were used of the Lord as a blessing to the Church. But we do believe too much was asked of them. We ought to face the problem of the large amount of business that is placed before our Synods. What factors cause the problem? Is there a possible remedy?

Evidently, the growth of our denomination has multiplied the problems of the churches. This is a factor in the increase of Synodical work. The larger our denomination becomes the more problems will be sent to Synod. This in turn demands that our work be analyzed so that as we grow we may become more efficient and yet maintain our thoroughness. In this connection there are a few questions we ought to face.

The first question is this: are our minor assemblies thorough in their work and cautious not to send matters to Synod too hastily? Our Church Order provides that "in major assemblies only *such matters* shall be dealt with *as could not be finished in minor assemblies*, or such as pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common" (Article 30). This means that every attempt should be made by our Consistories and Classes to settle the problems before them. We wonder whether this is being done as conscientiously as possible. Is there not a tendency in the minor assemblies to send matters to Synod rather than to grapple with them? We have observed that at times a Consistory asks Classis to send an overture to Synod and Classis, instead of studying the matter, will pass it on to Synod without comment. There are times too when our Classes adopt overtures to Synod with little study, because they trust that Synod will do the studying. It ought to be remembered that our minor assemblies meet more often than Synod and the members are in closer proximity. A matter may be studied more efficiently and with much less expense on the local level than on the broader level. During the war, ration stickers were placed on our automobile windows asking, "Is this trip really necessary?" It would be well for our Consistories and Classes to ask about Synodical overtures, "Is this overture really necessary?"

Related to sending too many matters to Synod is the question of whether we do not ask Synod to appoint too many study committees. Instead of sending overtures to Synod asking that a study committee be appointed, would it not be better for our Consistories or Classes to do the work of such committees in the first place and then to place before Synod such studies and recommendations as may be necessary. In this way many requests for Synodical committees might be avoided, and the result would save Synod both time and money.

THERE is another aspect still which may be involved in the overburdening of our Synods. Are we not placing too much emphasis upon legislation in the Synodical assemblies? We ask our Synods to make rule upon rule and precept upon precept. Must our Synods make rules to govern our people or our minor assemblies? Is the Word no longer sufficient as a rule of life? Would we not follow a better course by insisting that our Consistories deal with the application of the Scripture in admonition and discipline and ask Synod to serve primarily in a judicial capacity, facing particular cases which may be placed before it by the avenue of appeals? The multiplication of Synodical rules is fraught with dangers. Not only does it pose the danger of a legalistic Christianity but the application of unnecessary rules will only multiply the amount of work that will be brought before our Synods.

This article offers only a few suggestions for curtailing the amount of work being delegated to our Synods. Undoubtedly there are many others. Certainly all office bearers should be alert to the problem. We can do a great deal to make our Synods more thorough and more effective, if we stop thinking that Synodical action will work miracles, if we deal more fully with matters in the minor assemblies, and if we keep all unnecessary items from the agenda of our Synods.

Seventy-Five Years of Home Missions

By DICK L. VAN HALSEMA

On July 2, 1879, the first Christian Reformed missionary was ordained and sent out to his field: the United States. It is this fact that Synod 1954 will be asked to commemorate by calling the entire denomination to the observance of a "Home Missions Year" and to the serious expansion of our home missions work throughout the United States and Canada. Because of this anniversary, and because Synod will be confronted with many weighty home missions issues, this year's assembly possibly may be recorded in our history as a "Home Missions Synod." With this in mind, the following article has been written to relate certain outstanding elements in the seventy-five year history of Christian Reformed Home Missions.

It is impossible to summarize in one article all that is contained in thousands of pages of *Acts*, church weeklies, and books—but certain lessons can be gleaned which can help us right now. Again and again we have been reminded that "the history of our church in a narrow sense is then also the history" of home missions (Van Vessem, *Gedenkboek*, 135). Furthermore, an understanding of the past will be immensely helpful, both in the consideration of Synodical overtures and reports, and in the clearly-needed revamping of our denominational home missions program. Each of the succeeding paragraphs is centered about a particular point of importance or interest.

Interest in Missions: As has been shown repeatedly in denominational publications, interest in missions has existed in our denomination from its very inception in 1857. In fact, one of the four purposes for which Van Raalte led pioneer Dutchmen to Michigan in 1846-7 was "to have an active part in the propagation of God's truth among the heathen" (Beets, *Christian Reformed Church*, 1923, p. 30). As early as 1851, Classis Holland resolved to hold regular prayers and offerings for missions. When the new denomination was born in 1857, we read that Elder H. Lucas, the present author's great-grandfather, suggested that the custom be continued. This determination led eventually to the beginning of work among American "heathen," first in 1889 to the Rosebud Indians of the Dakotas (a short-lived attempt of ten months), then to the Navahos and Zunis of Arizona and New Mexico in 1896, and to the establishment of many other Indian field posts such as Rehoboth, New Mexico (established in 1902). Therefore, it is incorrect for us to say that our church has not been "mission-minded" until the present generation. Striking it is, however, that the denomination was to wait until it was three-quarters of a century old before the *home missions* committee began to plan seriously for the *evangelization* of our unchurched fellow-Americans (*Acts*, '26 and after).

Concentration on Immigrants: The Christian Reformed Church is almost one hundred years old. It is a significant fact that the care of immigrants, for seventy-five years the almost *exclusive* concern of our denominational home missions effort, in 1954 remains the *primary* object of Home Mission Committee attention. This can be explained, of course, and we are deeply grateful for God's providential building up of our church through immigration. Nonetheless, there is a growing conviction today that a way must be found for placing primary stress on a denominational program of work among unchurched Americans.

The First Home Missionary: The calling of the first home missionary occurred in the tumultuous post-Civil War period of the seventies and eighties, when the greatest 19th Century flood of European immigrants entered the United States. From the earliest years of our denomination, pastors regularly gave time for working with immigrants and for organization of new congregations. As early as 1863 there was official discussion about calling a home missionary specifically to work among the immigrants (*Minutes*, p. 26), but it was 1874 before the "Algemeene Vergadering van de Ware Hollandsche Gereformeered Kerk in Noord-Amerika" placed a notice in *De Wachter* stating that "those who desire to be called and sent out as Missionary Minister for our Church shall apply to the Classical Gathering of Michigan." Early records sketch the humorous outcome: the lone candidate was almost fifty years of age and had just been reprimanded by the Assembly for mismanagement of the denominational paper! Reluctantly the Assembly assigned him to missionary studies under Rev. D. J. Vander Werp, with the understanding that the Church was under no obligation whatever to engage him when he had finished his studies. When last heard from a year later, the brother was still studying. However, another call was sent out in 1877. This time, a Kalamazoo Christian school teacher presented himself for the necessary training: Tamme M. Vanden Bosch. After two years' special study at the new John Calvin Theological School in Grand Rapids, Vanden Bosch was declared a candidate, was called by the Board of Trustees to become "travelling preacher for inland missions," and was ordained on July 2, 1879. This first missionary minister set a rugged pace for his successors. In three years of work, Vanden Bosch was able to organize and strengthen Dutch-speaking congregations in Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Dakota, Nebraska and Wisconsin. His salary was only $550 per year; yet his love for missions led him to donate $100 at the Synod of 1881 for a new domestic Bible distribution fund which he had suggested. He resigned in 1882, much to Synod's regret. After a few years' vacancy, others responded to take up the work he began.

Home Missions as Evangelization: There is some justification for the statement that Christian Reformed evangelization efforts on a nation-wide scale are of a comparatively recent origin and still play only a minor role in the total home missions program of the denomination. Before the first World War, no work was carried on by the Home Missions committees among unchurched citizens. Until the second War, very little denominational evangelistic work actually was *done*. Even today, progress in this field is endorsed more in terms of official statement than

accomplished in terms of actual nning and budgeting and work in field. There have been explanans: isolation, initial lack of a culturly homogeneous membership, deands of internal expansion, financial nitations, feelings of inferiority, rm support of Christian education, k of vision, and lack of any denomational home missions department om 1907 to 1926—all of these have yed their roles. But, explanations of sterday's omissions cannot serve as day's excuses. True, we stand offially committed to "United Home Misonary Service" by Synodical action *Acts*, '47), but even the home missions mmittee itself reported to Synod in 49, "We are hesitant to declare that e 'United Home Missionary Service ogram' . . . has fired the imagination d souls of our entire church memrship. . . The ideals set forth in the lan) . . . . should be translated into alities!" Actually, there has been ore talk than denominational action.

When the Fourth Home Missions rder was adopted in 1936, some were ppy to find that the preface to these gulations included a reference to the nchurched." But, they had forgotten at this reference had been part of the ry first home mission order issued irty-eight years before! The Synod 1898 had ruled that a home missionry should be engaged to "work specifically among the Americans. . . herever the best opportunity beckons m, in order that an influence may go ut from us to the American people." *Acts*, '98). Despite this clear-cut decision of 1898 about "work specifically among the Americans," thirty years ter the church was still unable to get oing. Witness the seeming lack of ision and the inaction in a decision f the 1926 Synod: it turned down a lea to begin home mission work in iritually needy New York with the exuse that "we are already doing a great eal of work of this kind and it is conuinually branching out"! (*Acts*, '26,88). Without a doubt, the voting delegates f Synod were thinking in terms of imnigration work — but the overture with its explicit grounds leaves no oubt that the petition summoned ynod to take up work among the "unhurches," a labor which the 1898 ynod had approved.

Lay Interest: Such inaction was not he result of lay apathy. Some of the nost stirring articles were laymen's alls for Christian Reformed witness to the unchurched. John Kromminga cites an example of this in his denominational history (p. 152). Perhaps the most striking example of lay concern for our American neighbors who are without Christ was voiced in 1907 by Gelmer Kuiper. His articles in the well-known *Gedenkboek*, published when the denomination was fifty years old, sounds as if he were one of us today:

> "It is for the Church therefore to 'preach the Gospel' not to the Hollanders and Indians alone, but to 'all creatures! . . . . I am afraid that our attachment to what is Dutch has sometimes taken the place of attachment to Christ. As we have extended our efforts and started new churches, we have asked, 'Are there some of our people there?' . . . . It needs only to be called to our attention to see at once that this is not only ungrateful to those people among whom we have settled, but suicidal.
>
> "Again, we have stood too much aloof. Why? Are we fearful of the consequences to ourselves from contact? If we are, we are indeed to be pitied. Paul was not afraid to go to Macedonia or Rome. He realized his mission. We never hestitate to send missionaries to Japan for fear that they will become followers of Confucius, or to Turkey for fear that they may become Mohammedans, or to the Indians for fear they will worship idols. Why should the danger of local influence be greater? . . . . The duty of the clergy and laity is clear"!

Such candid honesty and fearless self-criticism we sorely need today!

In this short survey of denominational effort, attention cannot be given to the role of city missions and other local projects. However, a close study of what our local churches have done, singly or together, will no doubt amaze us. These local efforts not only antedate all real denominational home missions (except mission work among the Indians), but they also were the *direct cause* for the return in 1926 to denominational home missions directions after twenty years of no central coordination or program whatever (1906-1926). Five mid-Western Classes took up the plea which originated as a consequence of city mission work in Chicago: "Er moet meer eenheid komen in ons Inwendige Zendingswerk!" (*Acts*, '26). From their overtures to Synod came the beginnings of our present home missions administration. We can learn from this today: our entire evangelization structure must be rooted more locally than it is.

Home Missions Administration: while it is not our purpose to review the details, it is important to recognize that our present system of Home Mission Committee, classical home missions committees, and the like, is but the last stage in a long and somewhat contradictory development (see Harold Dekker's article in this issue).

Within seventy-five years, our home missions work has been subjected to no fewer than *seven* different forms of administration! In brief, these changes (on the average of one per decade) are the following: I. Denominational committees of three or more men (1880-1898); II. First Home Missions Order (denominational control: 1898-1907); III. Second Home Missions Order (independent classical control entirely: 1907-1926); IV. Third Home Missions Order (administration by "districts": 1926-1930); V. Third Home Missions Order, revised (denominational-classical cooperation: 1930-1936); VI. Fourth Home Missions Order (complete centralization denominational administration by a committee of men from the *Michigan area only!* 1936-1942); VII. Fourth Home Missions Order, revised (moderate denominational control: 1942 to present). Details on these stages can be ferreted out of the successive *Acts*. For the present, a few striking observations deserve to be recorded. One is that our Church today, without attempting merely to sit in judgment over our forebears, certainly ought to be able now to produce a *Fifth* Home Missions Order in which the most Scriptural, local-church centered, denominationally-coordinated program of home missions can be set forth. In seventy-five years, we have had systems of administration from one extreme to another with varying stages in between. No doubt, stages III and VI represent undesirable extremes. Stage V deserves attention once again. At any rate, we cannot complain for lack of material when we begin a study of how the revision of our home missions order should proceed!

Of more than historical interest are the reasons behind all of these changes. To single out only one period, the tran-

Seventy-five Years of Home Missions — Continued

sition from Stages I to II is reported in detail by *Acts, De Gereformeerde Amerikaan,* and other papers of that time. The issue from 1898 to 1906 was whether denominational or classical control of home missions was right. Rev. William Heyns and the then-young Denver dominee Idzerd Van Dellen carried on a running debate on the issue in *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan* (1907 and 1908). Apparently, the common reader found it difficult to understand every detail. The gravity of the whole business was considerably lessened by the entrance of a third contributor, the Rev. Peter Jonker, whose article, "Who is Right?", appeared in May 1908. Gravely depicting the plight of his perplexed parishoners, Jonker described how one had come to him with this complaint: "When I read the articles of Professor Heyns, I thing *He* is right. But when I read the articles of Rev. Van Dellen, I think *He also* is right. But—whose view *is* right?" (G A, May, '08). This wry humor is exhibited even more clearly in the part that certain home missionaries played in the debate. Already in 1898, wrote Dr. Henry Beets, the following repartee was reported. When the first home missions order of 1898 formally authorized the denominational "board," an opponent who claimed support of "Reformed principles" coined this couplet against the system of administration: "Verlos ons van de Boards, O Heer; Geef ons natuur en waarheid weer!" Not to be outdone, Missionary G. G. Haan, who thought the Board system worked just fine, countered with: "Verlos ons toch van zulke Gereformeerde beginselen, O Heer, En geef ons natuur en waarheid weer"!

The effects of the 1906-1926 experiment in independent classical control appear to have been largely unfavorable. The lack of over-all coordination was keenly felt; the role of individual congregations in missionary outreach changed hardly at all; active classes became more active while inactive classes remained idle; the *Board of Heathen Missions* took over coordination of church-wide home missions interests, which were thoroughly subordinated to Indian and foreign missions. We may conclude that such a system with no denominational coordination and planning would be as undesirable today as a system in which denominational control is predominant. The system we need today must open the way for the local congregations to become increasingly active in their own communities, singly and as classes; for the outlining of geographical "areas of responsibility" for each Classis; and . . . . for the denominational provision of over-all coordination, necessary materials, and attention to opportunities in the nation where no congregation (s) and Classes singly can meet the challenge to evangelize.

One more observation about the seven administrative stages: in Stage VI we notice that authority was placed in a Michigan-centered committee. Although not permitted to continue for more than six years, this "centralization" is an outward expression of the role that Michigan churches are likely to exert in denominational affairs. (*Yearbook* statistics over the years reveal that a very large share of our congregations are found in Michigan: in 1907, 65 out of 164 congregations were in that state; in 1932, 105 out of 270; in 1953, 130 out of 419. Only in recent years is the ratio showing definite indications of change.)

Related Home Missions Activities: a study of home missions in the Christian Reformed Church also reveals a relative lack of over-all coordination and improvement in certain aspects of essential home missions projects such as Jewish, Indian, and Radio missions (all of which are indisputably "home missions"). Concerning the first, Rev. I. Van Dellen twice of late has in *De Wachter* commented: "In general, we take too little notice of our mission work among the Jews"; "In general, this mission work lives far too little in the churches." Collections were started in 1892 and active work was assumed in 1914, but the Synod of 1953 still was concerned with difficulties and problems encountered in this frequently-neglected work.

Concerning Indian missions, a study reveals that the Federal government-inspired paternalism over the Indians (originating more than a century ago, when, for example, the government contracted with denominations to operate Indian schools) still tends to exercise an influence over missions practice. It is up to Christian missions among the Indians to point the way toward the establishment of a new racial confidence through proclamation of the Good News of salvation in Christ. The Synod of 1952 was told how all missionaries to the Indian field were being required now to spend a certain amount of time in language study. Too frequently forgotten is the fact that some of our early missionaries (see Professor Vanden Bosch's article on W. P. Brink, for example) made outstanding progress in this respect and that recent neglect of language study was not due to *lack of policy* but to lack of enforcement. The very first statement of Regulations, adopted in 1898, reads concerning missionaries to the Indians: it shall be their duty "to study the language, together with the morals, the customs, and the religion of the people among whom they labor" (*Acts*). And, *in* 1920, Classis Pella overtured Synod to make this study of language compulsory (*Agenda*). Thus, what Synod of 1952 heard about language study was not exactly a new policy.

The growth of our present radio ministry dates from 1939, but Synods had debated the issue for eleven years before that time (the original overture to which commencement of broadcasting can be traced was sent to the 1928 Synod). God has blessed this radio ministry exceedingly. This fact is all the more reason why the role of this denominational witness to the nation should be defined in terms of our total nationwide home missions program. Those who fail to see the need for this re-study of coordination, with whatever changes in administration may be called for as a consequence, cannot be aware of present difficulties that have been experienced in the last three years especially by those responsible for the supervision and execution of the radio evangelism work. A study of the history of our Christian Reformed broadcast over a period of fifteen years should help us improve its place in our over-all national missions plan and practice.

The Home Missionaries: in brief, all that we read about the procurement, training, utilization, and tenure of our valiant home missionaries stresses the need for improvement in many respects. Many "rond-reizende leeraars" were

standing men; however, many others e not as capable as the exacting k required. To this day, none of our ne missionaries have received any cial training for their work. Now he time to change this. It is to be ed that the 1954 Synod *by all means* endeavor to appoint at least one fessor of missions for the Seminary. fact, Synod should seriously con- er whether this appointment should be extended to an experienced, ined person whose *chief assignment* ll be the study and teaching of *ne missions* (see article by A. Ous- en, *De Wachter*, April 6, '54). The es demand this, irrefutably. It is esting to note that of the eighty- ht ministers who served as home ssionaries between 1879 and 1953, sixty-eight (77%) served only five years or less! The few who devoted more than ten years to home missions can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The trend was still continuing in the first four months of 1954, when several home missionaries entered other forms of work. It is our duty to reverse this trend, to attract the finest young men among us to specialize in a lifetime of home missionary service, and above all to provide all Seminarians with an adequate missionary stimulus through proper instruction and practical experience.

Reviewing the rise of interest in Christian Reformed home missions, one finds it interesting to note that it took the denomination about forty years to begin permanent mission work among the Indian tribes of Arizona and New Mexico (1857-1896), and eighty years to declare official readiness to undertake for church-wide response to the American home missions challenge. In 1954, ninety-seven years after its birth, the Christian Reformed Church is just getting under way in earnest with bringing the Gospel to its millions of neighbors.

This is not the time for contentment. Nor is this the time for discouragement. These are the days in which a generation with renewed, unshakeable faith can do great things for God and expect great things from God. Let this experience stir us, mobilize us, drive us.

Leonard Peter Brink

by J. G. VANDEN BOSCH

LEONARD PETER BRINK was rn September 10, 1876, and died arch 24, 1936. It may seem to some at a man whose career was so recent his, almost contemporary with that several still living, is hardly fit to the subject of our next biographical etch. The criticism is not without int, but let us remember that eighteen ars are long enough to cause even e most popular among men to be for- tten. The excellent account of Rev. rink's life by Dr. Lee S. Huizenga, ublished in 1937, is out of print. And r the sake of variety it seemed wise choose a pioneer and leader, not in e ministry of the early days, nor in e teaching profession, but in the eld of missions.

In 1872, at the age of eighteen, Peter rink left Apeldoorn, Holland, more pecifically Het Loo, the site of one of e favorite palaces of the Dutch royal amily, and came to these shores, set- ling in East Saugatuck. Three years ater he married, and a year later Leon- rd Peter was born. Only fourteen weeks after his birth the child lost his nother. He was reared in the home of is paternal grandparents until he was ive years old, when his father again narried and bought a clearing near Fremont, Michigan.

Fremont at that time was a young settlement. Much of the land was still wooded and some of the roads were mere trails through the forest; in fact, pioneer conditions still prevailed. The fact that young Brink was reared in a frontier community was excellent preparation for the pioneer work he had to do as missionary. It is in such an environment that the qualities of willingness to work hard, resourcefulness, endurance, and independence are developed, precisely such qualities as Brink had need of in his work among the Navahos.

One who is versed in the frontier lore of America knows how prone settlers were to become indifferent to religion. None knew this so well as the Methodist circuit rider as he followed them and endeavored to keep the fires of religious faith burning in them. But our Dutch settlers of Fremont, many of them from Graafschap and East Saugatuck, did not leave their religion behind. By and large they were God-fearing people, and saw to it that a church was organized in order that their faith might not suffer. Reared in a home where true piety prevailed—both his father and his stepmother, whom L. P. always honored as a good mother, were pious people—young Brink grew up a serious boy and at sixteen made profession of faith.

IT WAS at this early age, also, that the desire to be a minister of the gospel had struck root in his soul. The Christian atmosphere prevailing in the home, the deep interest of Christian parents in the church, and the encouraging remarks of an elder who taught the catechism class were means used of God to create in Brink, young as he was, this noble aspiration. But the parents were too poor to give the boy the necessary education. An announcement from the pulpit that classis was ready to give financial aid to a young man wishing to serve God in the ministry admitted a ray of hope. And God in his providence opened the way. Not only did the consistory recommend young Brink, but classis after a competitive examination of several aspirants selected him. When the news was broken to him, he was amazed. It was almost too good to be true.

In the fall of 1893 Brink enrolled as a student in the Theological School, where L. Berkhof, M. J. Bosma, M. Botbyl, H. Keegstra, and J. L. Van Tielen were his classmates and rivals in learning. In 1900 he graduated having finished the seven years with an enviable record for scholarship. To distinguish him from other Brinks, J. W., A. J., and J. R., students began to

Leonard Peter Brink — Continued

call him L. P., a designation he accepted and used as his pen name. Most of his contributions to the *Christian Indian* are signed L. P.

The wish to preach the gospel to the Indians of the Southwest, occasioned perhaps by the stories father told at the fireside about Indians whose spiritual plight was stressed, came to fruition in an unexpected way. Illness of a worker at Tohatchi created a vacancy. The need of an immediate successor was urgent. Having heard of Candidate Brink's leanings, the Mission Board offered him the position on the evening of a romantic day spent with his fiancee. The Board pressed for an immediate decision. He promised prayerful consideration, and soon responded favorably. At a meeting of Classis Holland that extended to him the formal call, he was present, accepted, and submitted that same day to his examination, which he passed brilliantly. He was ordained August 1, 1900, in the First Church of Zeeland, was married a few days later to Elizabeth Van Eeuwen, daughter of a Fremont neighbor, and a month later left for New Mexico.

Rev. Brink was now a missionary among the Navahos, though not the first. Rev. H. Fryling and Mr. A. Van der Wagen had preceded him by the space of four years and had done much valuable preliminary work. But only the merest beginning had been made so that there was still a vast deal of pioneer work to be done especially since these brethren were soon transferred to Zuni. With the exception of one year, 1913-'14, during which for the sake of his own health and that of his wife who did not recover, he lived in California and served the church at Hanford, he labored among the Navahos from his ordination to his death. stationed first at Tohatchi, later at Toadlena, and lastly at Farmington.

THE PERSONALITY of L. P. was such as suited an efficient white worker among the Indians. Shrewd in business and handy with tools, he was a useful man on the mission field. His robustness and his love of life in the open spaces of the desert stood him in good stead. Fastidiousness never stood in the way of his drinking the coffee and eating the mutton chop and stew his host in the hogan offered him. He easily adapted himself for the time being to the red man's way of living. Friendly and helpful and in his dealings with Indians honest and reliable, he gained their confidence and was respected by them. Like Paul, L. P. became all things to all men that he might by all means save some.

Rev. Brink had faith in the work of bringing the gospel to the aborigines of our land. Apparently he never doubted tthat the work was eminently worth while. Unlike the first missionary the Church sent out, in 1889, to labor among the Indians of the Rosebud Agency in South Dakota, who before a year had passed was so discouraged that he begged to be relieved of his mission. L. P. threw himself into his work with the determination that springs from faith.

From the very beginning there had been opposition to missions among the red men. Indians belonged to a dwindling race and were doomed to extinction; they were so stupid and superstitious that preaching the gospel to them would yield no results; they had the roaming instinct so strong that, though there might be a few converts, these could not be organized into a stable church; they were lazy and improvident, not self-supporting; they so hated the white man that they would have nothing of his religion. These Indians, therefore, could not be of any importance in the course of civilization and work among them could have no strategic value for the Kingdom of God. Thus ran the arguments raised by the opposition. As late as 1918 the editor of the *Banner* used these same arguments to account for his being averse to the extension of our missionary endeavors beyond our borders into the countries of Central and South America. L. P. must have taken notice of all this argumentation, but, if he did, the force of it did not weaken his faith or discourage him in the least. During L. P.'s student days the *Student Volunteer* movement under the strong leadership of John R. Mott was at the height of its influence. If this influence reached our students, L. P. obviously was not moved by it, even though it stressed occupying the strategic center of the world. He would be a missionary among the Navahos.

Faith in his cause made him pursue his task with untiring devotion and with great concentration of effort. sent him on long journeys over rough roads and across unbridged arroyo for the purpose of exploring every nook and corner of his field and acquainting himself with its needs. He often spent the night under heaven's canopy, in a big bedroom without ceiling—thus he described the experience to his children—endured the inconvenience of the elements such as rain or snow, and made his own meals in camping fashion. Roughing it, we would call it. Faith in his cause made him associate with his Indian acquaintances sometimes conversing with them for hours in order that he might get a glimpse into the soul of the red man. It led him to study the religion and the culture of the Indian, knowledge of which could help him in presenting the gospel message. It induced him to study the Navaho language with a view to providing the natives with the necessary Christian literature in their own tongue. It was the incentive of all he did, whether he taught children or adults, visited hogans, preached at camp meeting or in chapel, or was engaged in sundry activities too numerous to mention. As his biographer tells us even when he seemed to be doing nothing he was doing something. He wrought with amazing unhurried energy. In a relative sense it was true also of him that the zeal of the Lord's house consumed him.

FROM faith in his cause sprang his unswerving idealism. L. P. was a man with vision. He was not satisfied with doing merely the work in the station assigned to him. He saw the spiritual needs of the entire field; he planned, he mapped. He could not rest until at every strategic point a station was organized, properly equipped and manned. Often he wrote and spoke as if the whole field was his and the care of the field rested solely upon him. In his vision he went beyond the boundaries of his own denomination and was moved with the red race's plight everywhere. In the Southwest there were tribes to which Christ had not yet been preached. So deeply did his compassion for the unevangelized In-

n stir him that he gave poetic utter-
e to it in at least two poems, the one
nd in No. 174 of the *Christian*
nnal and the other entitled *Indians*
reached, of which one stanza reads
follows:

Lord, do stir up many more
Who'll give their lives and earthly store
o bring them joy and peace,
o see their need, their mute appeal,
n Christ to bring them endless weal,
rom power of sin release.

t was hard for Rev. Brink to re-
quish an ideal, once it had assumed
pe in his soul. He clung to it and
rked untiringly for its realization.
he met with rebuff at one point, he
uld try at another. Vividly seeing
portunities all around him, he some-
es became impatient with the slow
cedure of Board and Synod. Some-
es his aggressiveness would meet
h the disapproval of his fellow work-
. He would act first and explain
er. Some of this aggressive spirit
be traced to the mad rush that was
in L. P.'s days between Catholics
d Protestants for occupation of the
ld. But, however we may explain
tactics, we must remember that
thout L. P. we might not have had
Indian field, only a station or two.

Rev. Brink availed himself of every
eans whereby evangelistic effort
ong Navahos and Zunis could be
engthened. Eagerly he contributed
the *Instructor,* our Sunday School
per, keenly realizing that here he had
golden opportunity to awaken love
r missions in the youth of the
urch. He also sought to build a
ong missionary enterprise among
d men by means of the *Christian In-
an,* of which he was editor without
terruption from its second issue till
s death. In this monthly L. P. voiced
s views on a variety of missionary
pics and problems and filled its col-
mns with items of interest pertaining
mission fields and with devotional
aterial. The Southwest Bible and
lissionary Conference, an interde-
ominational project, held annually at
lagstaff, Arizona, also enlisted his en-
usiastic support. The sessions, ad-
ressed during a period of twelve days
y speakers invited for the purpose,
imed at instructing and inspiring
both workers and converts and at giving direction to projects common to all mission fields, such as the unifying of all translation work and the adoption of a uniform alphabet.

IN THE resourceful mind of L. P. some schemes were born that came to grief. There was his idea of uniting the four organized churches of the field into a separate classis, backed by the plea that problems arising in Indian churches could best be solved by those directly concerned. This plan, not approved by synod, emerged from its dream state, into only an unofficial body meeting once or twice a year. A school at Rehoboth for training native workers also filled his vision, for he was convinced that there was no better way of spreading the good tidings than by well trained native workers. This dream came only partly true. The school did not produce as many helpers and evangelists as he had expected.

Rev. Brink's achievements as a translator deserve special comment. A good translator must be a linguist. And L. P. was one: even as a student he excelled in language study. To be able to translate Scripture, L. P. had to know not only Hebrew and Greek, together with a number of versions in different languages, but also Navaho, and know these well enough to find the exact word or phrase and to reproduce the subtle nuances and the rhythms of the original. It must have meant endless hours of hard work to master without benefit of language school or language teacher the Navaho language, which because of its complicated structure is exceedingly difficult. But with the help of others he persevered. He felt that the gospel should be brought to the red man in his own tongue. And so he toiled and toiled and gave the Navahos in their own speech a catechism, a song book containing ninety-three hymns, twenty-eight being his own translations, simplified forms for baptism, communion, and marriage, and most important of all *God Bizad,* which was a collection of a few entire books of the Bible, together with divers selected portions. This had the distinction of being published by the American Bible Society. He could even preach in Navaho, though at regular services he generally spoke with the help of an interpreter. To those who were skeptical of the value of translations he replied that the readiness with which Indians received them proved the justification of his arduous labors.

A busy missionary who has time for writing poetry is a rare person. Yet L. P. had his moments of inspiration, and the poems he wrote give evidence of respectable poetic ability. The verses do not glow with colorful diction and original phrase; rather, they flow in rhythms which, though smooth, are spare. All the poems breathe a spirit of Christian devotion. Some are translations, the best known, No. 460 of the *Psalter-Hymnal,* being a version of a Dutch hymn:

Hours and days and years and ages
Swift as moving shadows flee,

the mood and rhythm of which have been done with singular effectiveness. The first line with its use of polysyndeton is an improvement upon the original. Most of his poems are the product of his own inspiration and were published in the *Christian Indian.*

ONE CANNOT rise from a study of L. P.'s career without coming to the conclusion that he was a great missionary. He gave himself to the Lord's work with all he was and had. If ever he was discouraged, he did not let the public know. He refused to speak of the privations a missionary must endure, such as the lack of civilized society and its comforts and the absence of friends and relatives. When by way of exception he allowed himself to do so in the *Christian Indian,* he mentioned living among pagans, bringing up children in heathen surroundings, and being compelled to send children at an early age to distant schools to give them a Christian education as hardships to be borne, but in the same breath he spoke of a missionary career as an investment that yielded returns so rich that, compared with these, the privations dwindled into nothing. His reports of his work were invariably tinged with optimism. Those who had the privilege of laboring with him recognized his ability and devotion and

Leonard Peter Brink — Continued

confessed to have learned much from him. Leading men in other denominations saw in L. P. an outstanding missionary. The *Christian Endeavor World* called him the Cadmus of the Navahos.

Rev. Brink dearly loved his Savior. His poems and his contributions to the *Christian Indian* that were of a personal nature are blossomings of this love. It might seem that he was something of a Stoic, but behind a seemingly cold and rough exterior there was a heart throbbing with tender love for his Lord and with compassion for the unsaved Indian. His curtness often disguised his basic kindness, which, however, on intimate acquaintance broke warmly through. His mysticism never expressed itself in sentimental drivel; rather, it was of a calm and serene variety. Of him it was eminently true that still waters run deep. At the thirty-fifth anniversary of his installation as a missionary Classis California and friends attending the Flagstaff Conference gave dinners in his honor. The words of appreciation L. P. wrote in the *Christian Indian* in response to these events breathe deep humility and pulsate with tenderest feelings. In his theology he was staunchly Reformed. All he was and did he traced to the sovereign grace of God.

Alas, strenuous labors in a high altitude were too much for our robust missionary. High blood pressure warned him that his physical frame was weakening. But he did not spare himself. Finally his heart gave out, and, when he was not yet sixty years old, he died at the home of his eldest son, Dr. Peter Djopaih Brink, at Pomeroy, Washington, leaving his faithful wife, nee Grace Stevens, whom he married in 1915, and ten children to pursue life's pathway without him. The bell tolled sad news the day of his burial at Rehoboth, for the Navahos had lost a true friend, the mission force an inspiring worker, and the church a consecrated servant. But the work continues, being faithfully carried on by others. His son, Leonard P. Brink, Jr., superintendent of the educational work at Rehoboth, nobly continues in the tradition of his father.

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

Concerning Two Kinds of Love

DEAR EDITOR:

May I make a few observations in connection with the article, "Christian Ethics and the Doctrine of Election," by Dr. James Daane, in the February *Journal*, page 4?

In introduction, and incidentally, may I offer the comment that the more closely and clearly we can base our conclusions on definite Bible statements the better we shall understand each other in good agreement. The "if, . . . then" method of argumentation has certain necessity and validity. but it has also its limitations. The links in our reasoning are so readily, so often, open to question and *sometimes* learned writers lack clarity while *often* average readers lack perceptiveness.

Now to the real thrust of this writing. We would like very much to know how Dr. Daane interprets for us certain passages pertinent to the discussion in hand.

He writes on page 5, third column, top, in speaking of the Bible: "It denounces an Ethic that cries: Identification first!" Eight lines lower we read: "Does the Bible teach that we must *first discriminate* between men and *then* dispense our ethics? The biblical answer is always, No."

In the light of that, how shall we understand the injunction of Gal. 6:10: "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith"? Does the esteemed writer agree that the word "especially" here bids us discriminate ("distinguish carefully"—Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1953) between "all men" and the "household of faith"?

Again, how would Dr. Daane have us interpret and apply I Pet. 2:17, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood"? Obviously, this would not annul the broader rule to love the neighbor, but must we learn that there is a brother circle to "carefully distinguish" here?

Not to multiply instances, let us take but one more: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). Our thoughtful readers may readily note from their concordances—precious tools!—how often I John stresses love to the "brother" and "brethren." It will be a privilege to have brother Daane's explanation of John's stress on loving the "brother."

Is our "love toward all the saints" (Eph. 1:15, Col. 1:4) the same as our neighbor love? When our Heidelberg Catechism (QS. 55) explains the "communion of saints," is it speaking of something different from our neighbor love?

We realize, Mr. Editor, that it is much easier to ask questions than to answer them but do not these angles of the matter under discussion plead for further light?

March 3, 1954

Rev. Cornelius Holtrop
Terra Ceia, N. C.

(Dr. Daane addresses himself to Rev. Holtrop's questions in an article which will appear in the next issue of the *Journal*. —Eds.)

On Labor

EDITOR OF THE REFORMED JOURNAL

Two articles have appeared in the Reformed Journal recently which have disturbed me—and others with me—so that I feel the need of making some comment. I have reference to the article of Rev. Leonard Verduin which appeared in the October, 1953 issue, and the of Rev. George Stob printed in the Februar 1954 issue. Please allow me to comment briely on both.

I have read and re-read Rev. Verduin's article and have asked myself: who is he tryin to hit? The answer supposedly is to be foun in the last part of his essay when he refers those who believe in separate Christian orga ized activity. But actually the brother miss them entirely and one wonders what he ma himself so busy about.

Who, among those who believe in separa Christian organizations, has ever advocated th ideas which Rev. Verduin seeks to thrust upo them? Who of them believes in monolith cism as presented by him, a society in whic all men would be compelled to accept Chri tianity or, refusing to do so, would be persec ted or at least discriminated against? Re George Stob makes the same unfounde charge, but more on that later.

Referring to an observation in the *Free Un versity Quarterly*, to the effect that "Americ is fast becoming post-Christian" Rev. Verdui states: "But this observation is not born of a examination of the statistical evidence; flows from the major premise that Christianit must have the "benefit" of a monolithic soc ety plus the minor premise that American s ciety is monolithic." I was amazed when read that. There is not a professor on the fac ulty of the Free University who proceeds fro that so-called major premise. The Free Un versity stands as a monument to the very op posite ideals, as every one who knows its hi tory ought to know. And does not Rev. Ver duin know that the Christian organized acti ity, which he deplores and connects with mon olithic idealism, came into being as a result the emancipation of Christianity in the Neth erlands from a society that was still greatl influenced by monolithic thinking, and from Church that had the "benefit" of State protec tion, the very thing that Verduin does no want, and no-one else wants for that matter

I am not called on to defend the Nether lands' brethren, but really the statistical ev dence which Rev. Verduin later marshals t prove that Christianity has fared very well i American "compositism," by citing that som 60% of Americans are church members, is ra ther weak, when one is mindful of the fac that Verduin is writing on *Biblical Christian ity*, which is orthodox, and that the Dutc brethren have that in mind too when they de plore the decline of true Christianity. Woul it be unfair to assume that less than one-tent ot that 60% of American church members ar people who are committed to *Biblical Chris tianity?*

Thus all of Rev. Verduin's arguments a gainst a bogey monolithicism miss the mark His misunderstanding about how Christian or ganizations operate is evident in his question "Suppose we do organize Christian labor un ions and suppose we do get every believer int them—will that solve our problem? Will i not be necessary to meet with other Unions t discuss and resolve common problems? The the leaders of such separate labor unions wi have to attend meetings where the Word o God does not have the right-of-way, which the cannot, may not do. And if they silence thei consciences for the moment and go to suc a forbidden place and do useful work ther —then we ask, how come it is wrong for th members on lower levels to do an identica thing?"

ight after that Verduin says: "now let no caricature our position!" *That,* after *he* caricatured and misrepresented the position of those whom he attacks. Who of those believe in Christian labor unions has ever that it is wrong at all times to be a member of a so-called "neutral" union, or to meet non-Christians to discuss common problems? Our position is and has always been membership in such unions is condemned the Word of God if such unions are guilty practices that conflict with the teachings of Word and if, after attempts have been le to remove the evil practices it is clear such attempts are futile and that such an anization is hostile to *Biblical* Christianity.

ven then, we believe, it is not wrong to ct a certain measure of co-operation in the motion of common interests that are in harny with Christian principles. But, those thus co-operate remain free men. They not in any sense then responsible for the in the other organization. It is because of h responsibility that the Church in which . Verduin is a Minister, has repeatedly ned against membership in so-called "neu- " organizations and has urged its mems to establish organizations based on the rd of God. That Church did not, nor do advocates of Christian organizations, therepromote withdrawal from society. Chris- organizations are strong opponents of Anaotism. Instead of withdrawing from society, y organize for more effective work *within* iety, by united Christian effort, and sepaed from other groups within society that are erting an unwholesome influence. Verduin, l Stob also, seem to think that when people n their backs on a certain organization they arate from society. That is not true at all. e neutral organizations are not identical h society, altho a part of it. They exert ir humanistic influence. The Christian orization seeks to exert a positive Christian luence. And that influence can be powerful Christians will unite. Then witness by press d radio, and before legislative bodies, will possible. In Verduin's and Stob's method e voices of individual Christians, speaking akly here and there, are lost in the cacophy of unbelief. United Christian witness uld deal with problems of the day in the ht of the Word of God.

I shall not caricature Rev. Verduin's posin. But I deplore its weakness. There is a ace for "sweet reasonableness" at times to sure, but there are times too when the deands of the Word of God must be clearly d boldly presented. And then persecution ill come. His idea of an ideal condition is e time when there were no martyrs. And he lates the touching scene of a young Chrisan whose life was spared by pagans who hen they observed him in prayer recognized m as one "of the faith." That incident is ted as an indication of the "enviable place hristianity had carved out for itself in the ulture of the times." To me it would rather e an indication of how the Church of that me had watered down its testimony which, I elieve, is also more historically true.

But that presentation by Verduin is in line ith the disturbing idea running through his rticle that Christianity must, if not officially t least in practice, give place to other relions as having equal value. Even after Rev. erduin's explanation of his use of the term myth" I cannot escape that thought, especially hen in referring to the story of Servetus he tates that "this man had broken with the docrine of the Trinity (a hip-rafter in the "Myth" of the Geneva of his day)." To me such flippant references to the Christian faith and one of its basic doctrines sounds almost sacrilegious. It is all part of a pattern running through the entire article of Verduin.

The Bible demands a much more militant Christianity than that pictured by Verduin. True enough it does not justify the use of the sword, nor the power of the State, to establish the Kingdom, but it clearly and unequivocally presents the truth that there is only one way of salvation, only one true religion, and that the Christian. Is that testimony to be suppressed, lest we arouse antagonism and there might be martyrs again? The Scriptures admonish us to beware of that day when all men will speak well of us. That will be an indication of a dead Church.

There is more in Verduin's article, much more, on which I would like to comment. But I dare not ask for the space it would require. Allow me only a few more remarks. I regret that Rev. Verduin immediately confuses the issue by speaking of "two camp Christianity." Actually there is no such Christianity. Christianity speaks of two camps alright, but then it has in mind the camp of the Christians and the camp of the world, or those of believers and unbelievers. That is putting it correctly.

Verduin seems to be mortally afraid of the antithesis coming to expression in society. That is undoubtedly due to misunderstanding of the term as used by those who do believe in giving it expression in society. There is really no excuse for such misunderstanding since the proponents of separate Christian action have made abundantly clear that they do not mean that Christians must withdraw from all contact with the non-Christian. The antithesis is spiritual, and thus absolute. But that spiritual separation does not demand absolute separation from the non-Christian in social contact. Of course not. We remain members of society. But, within that society we must work for the Kingdom of God. How can that best be done? You see it is a question of method. In society there are organizations already functioning but they refuse to be bound by the precepts of any religion. To them all religions are of equal value, but they have no bearing on social problems. Rev. Verduin and others claim that nevertheless in such organizations Christianity can be given expression. I, and others, say that that is impossible not only but that the philosophy of such organizations will destroy the Christian witness, and with it the Church, eventually. We believe that the only hope for a strong Christian witness is through organized Christian action, within society, but apart from other organizations in society that are basically hostile to *Biblical* Christianity. Thus only can the voice of Christianity be heard in our nation and can any impact be made upon society.

* * *

Allow me also some brief comment on the article of Rev. Geo. Stob. Much of my reply to Rev. Verduin can be addressed to him with equal force. For that reason I can be brief.

I am not satisfied with Rev. Stob's definition of the Christian's task in society. The statement "to participate in the life and task of human society, to recognize his responsibility with respect to the ordering and functioning of its life, and to exert his influence as a Christian upon that life to a good and proper end" is acceptable if properly interpreted, but Stob's own interpretation is unsatisfactory when he says: "such ordering of the common life of our world as will make for the preservation of the world's life until he marks the time for its destruction and renewal."

That does not satisfy me, nor should it any Calvinist. Really, is there nothing more for us to do than to see to it that things keep on rolling along until the end of this dispensation? Rev. Stob prefers to speak of the Christian's task as that of being a "salt," as a preserver. But Jesus said more than that. He stated also that if that "salt" has lost its "savor" it is thenceforth good for nothing, which indicates a different function than that of mere preservation. The Christian is to give taste to the world too, so that it may be acceptable. Furthermore, what about the "leaven" and the "light" functions? Surely there is more to be done than Rev. Stob outlines in his explanation of what is a "good and proper end," as being the "maintenance of our common life."

If that is all, then I agree that it can be accomplished as well by the unbeliever as by the Christian. We then do not really need the Christ for this life at all, at least not for our life in society: he is needed only for the salvation of our souls and the hereafter.

In fact Rev. Stob's reasoning about the Christian being a "salt" becomes quite meaningless if it is true, as he claims, that because of common grace the unbeliever can be equally well equipped to perform this task. Then the non-Christian is that "salt" too, and what Christ indicated as being a work of Special grace is really mere common grace.

Then questions begin to multiply. Especially when Rev. Stob refers to the equal accomplishments of the non-Christian as *good,* and allows no qualification. It is simply *good.* And since it is of equal value with that of the Christian in the social task the non-Christian is on equal footing with the Christian in the sight of God. That is a very valid conclusion to be drawn from Rev. Stob's position.

Now if what Rev. Stob says is true then, of course, our entire program for exerting Christian influence has been wrong. Why then have Christian schools? We do not need them for the children's salvation. That is the task of the Church. We have Christian schools to train children for their Christian task in society, but if that task can be equally well done by those who have never had that training, why have them? If common grace only is necessary, why, the public schools are fruits of common grace too, are they not?

Rev. Stob's argumentation is faulty almost entirely. We, who believe in Christian organizations, believe in common grace too. But, we do not believe in Rev. Stob's ideas on common grace. Nor do I believe that his views are those of the Christian Reformed Church. Rev. Stob goes far beyond what that Church ever intended to say. That subject will be debated for years to come undoubtedly and I shall not venture to define the Church's position. But it is not and cannot be the position of Rev. George Stob.

Basically, I believe, the mistake of Stob is that he does not view the work of common grace in the framework of the entire redemption plan of God. Common grace is here because of special grace. If Christ had not come there would have been no common grace. Hence also the fruits of common grace are the result of the redemptive work of Christ. They must be subject to the building of the Kingdom, to the purposes which God intended. For these purposes, the ultimate fulfillment of

God's plan, God uses also the unbelievers and enables them to perform certain functions which we call moral good. Among these are law and order, good government, honest dealings, etc., and so long as these contribute to the building of the Kingdom—for freedom of speech, justice, fairdealings, etc., are necessary conditions for the proper functioning of Kingdom causes—then these have some value as moral good in the sight of God.

However, when the fruits of common grace are perverted to another use, if they are subjected to the service of the Kingdom of Man, to humanism, then it is quite different. Rev. Stob recognizes that too and therefore comes with a new idea, namely that the grace of God never produces humanism and that therefore what the non-Christian does in society that appears to be good *is* good. But that does not follow. What appears to be good to us may not be good at all. For, when the good which is produced by common grace, the blessings of common grace, are no longer contributing to the building of God's Kingdom, then that good is no longer good in the sight of God. Now it will not do to try to create an area in which men are neither in the service of God nor in the service of man as Rev. Stob tries to do. The Bible knows of no such third category. Either men are *for* God or *against* him. There is, as Rev. Stob well knows, no neutrality with God. When men have been confronted with the Gospel, and have made their choice, they are either in God's camp or in the other. Which does not mean that all that is done by those in the first camp is holy, and all that is done by those in the second is devilish, no, but the direction of their lives is indicated by their basic commitment to either *for* God or *against* him.

What then must the believers do? Separate? That is, withdraw from society? Of course not. They have a work to perform there. They must in Society be witnesses of the redemptive program of God, and they must seek to maintain in society not only but to strengthen application of ethical and moral values that will be helpful in the building of the Kingdom. The Christian Church cannot flourish in a Communistic system, its existence will be greatly endangered in a purely secular system, hence while in obedience to God's commandments Christians are rendering service to mankind they are doing it always in the program of the building of the Kingdom. That is *good* in the sight of God.

It may be necessary, in order to wage a more successful battle against secularism and humanism, to establish Christian organizations, not hindered by the entangling unbelief of the so-called neutrals. I believe that that is not only necessary but absolutely imperative. Without united Christian activity in this age of powerful organizations of unbelievers, we cannot wage the battle or give the testimony which God demands of us.

That is why the CLA is here. The CLA sees in the CIO and AFL, aside from their unchristian character, a great danger to Kingdom institutions. The political power of these organizations, their insistence upon the philosophy of humanism and their championing of "neutral" institutions, are a real threat to the future development of our Christian way of life even in this nation. It is only through a Christian organization that these dangers can be effectively fought by us. That is only one phase of a broad Christian program of action.

It should hardly be necessary to reply to the entirely mistaken notion that the CLA if it should gain dominance would persecute, or discriminate against non-Christians. The idea is so absurd as to be hardly worthy of refutation. The CLA has always advocated that all men should be free to join the union of their choice, confessional union or otherwise, and that there ought to be proportionate representation on bargaining committees, etc. I am not now entering upon the practical aspects but that is enough to prove how entirely wrong Rev. Stob is about his conception of the CLA.

It is more than regrettable that Rev. Stob regrets that the Christian Reformed Church has endorsed Christian organizations. Something I cannot understand is why Rev. Stob, who is otherwise such a champion of good order, does not in the orderly way seek a change in the official stand of the Church, rather than to stir up popular opinion against the Church's stand and thus undermining respect for the authority of the Church.

Be that as it may, I am convinced that the way Rev. Stob wants us to go is the way to complete surrender to the philosophy of humanism. Materialism is already a very dangerous force among us. There is close affinity between that and humanism. And from humanism to modernism is only another step. It is a process, hardly discernable at times perhaps, but there nevertheless.

Joseph Gritter

Reply

My reply to Mr. Gritter's notes can be quite brief.

I call what he has written *notes* because he makes no attempt to come to grips with the central issue of my contribution. Instead of launching a frontal attack upon my thesis, that New Testament Christianity is favorable to cultural compositism and that cultural monolithicism is of pagan origin, he lets fly a few frantic *ad hominem* barbs aimed at my flank.

I should stop right here. For I have no interest in any engagement except a frontal engagement. Any other strategy fails to serve a useful purpose. And, emotion-packed potshots at peripheral items is undignified rabble rousing.

Why should I allow myself to be drawn into an argument as to whether professors at the Free University are committed to the major premise of a certain syllogism (a syllogism which, by the way, Mr. Gritter misquotes so badly as to strip it of all intelligence)? I have not said that they are so committed.

Why should I enter a debate as to what portion of Church-related Americans is "committed to Biblical Christianity"? That not all that glitters is gold is a thing I already knew; and that not all people who have their names on a church roll are twiceborn persons is a truism; and to remind us of the fact is not at all to the point, and, does not touch my argument. No doubt it was true that of the not much above 6% who in 1789 (at the end of our experimentation with monolithicism) still were church-related some were nominal Christians — just as it is no doubt true that of the nearly 60% who in 1954 are church-related some are similarly nominal. But what has that to do with my argument? Unless Mr. Gritter is prepared to show that the steady gain under compositism is offset by an equally steady deterioration as to quality he is simply playing to the galleries. And my contention that America has fared well since the inaugural of compositism is untouched by what he writes.

Why should I get involved in the question-begging assertion that "in Verduin's . . . method the voices of the individual Christians . . . are lost in the cacophany of unbelief"? I only wish to go on record as holding that the voice of Jesus, of His disciples, of the apostolic Church, may hardly be said to have been "lost in the cacophony of unbelief" just because they carried on without the benefit (?) of separate and antithetical social organizations.

Why should I be bothered with the *ad hominem* contention that to speak of the doctrine of the Trinity as a "hip-rafter" in the Myth of Geneva is "almost sacriligious"? Mr. Gritter is near enough to the building trades to know that a hip-rafter is simply a main timber in a certain type of roof. And I wish to assure him that this my figure is not half as bold as to call Jesus Christ "the head of the corner."

Mr. Gritter's notes fairly bristle with inaccuracies (historical and otherwise), with fallacies, with irrelevancies. I pass them by with a bow; for I refuse to engage in sniping at the fringes.

Let my worthy opponent address himself to the issue. Let him refute my argument that New Testament Christianity makes for cultural compositism and that every tendency toward cultural monolithicism betrays pagan thought habits. And, since he is particularly interested in the bearing of all this upon separate and antithetical social organizations, let him refute my contention that these are essentially nothing but remnants of the monolithic scheme which we of America have repudiated.

Unless he does this I shall conclude that he finds the trust of my argument unassailable — and I shall conclude this in spite of his courageous whistling about the "weakness" of my argument.

I wish to assure Mr. Gritter that he will make this his task easier and will render it more likely to serve a useful purpose if he will lay aside the prism through which he has been reading, the prism that makes him write such ridiculous things as the assertion that I "immediately confuse the issue by speaking of 'two-camp Christianity!'" seeing that "actually there is no such Christianity." To keep the record straight let the whole paragraph that is said to "confuse the issue" be quoted: "Biblical Christianity is two-camp Christianity. It knows beforehand that there will never be a standard response to the claims of its Christ whom men will either reject or accept. As John Dewey has put it very properly, 'historically Christianity has been committed to a separation of sheep and goats; the saved and the lost; the elect and the masses.' Any 'christianity' that does not deal in terms of two camps is a misnomer." I leave it to any informed person whether there is a single syllable out of place in this passage. I know that no Reformed person will be able to put a finger on it. And this knowledge makes me confident that any one who calls this a paragraph that "immediately confuses the issue" is not wronged when I ask him to lay aside a prism that has distorted his vision.

Leonard Verduin

(NOTE: Rev. George Stob will discuss the questions raised by Mr. Gritter in a later issue of the *Journal*. A communication, similar to that of Mr. Gritter, has been received from Mr. F. P. Fuykschot, and this will be published in June. After its appearance Rev. Stob will make reply to both correspondents. The Editors)